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Chairman: Mr. Raubenheimer (Vice-Chairman) ..... (South Africa)
later: Ms. Zubčević (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Croatia)

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In the absence of Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Raubenheimer (South Africa), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 94: Environment and sustainable development (A/58/25 and A/58/204)

(a) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (A/58/164)

(b) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/58/158)

(c) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/58/191)

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Introduction and general discussion

1. **Mr. Lorenzo** (Mexico) said that his Government's new approach to the challenge posed by natural disasters emphasized prevention, albeit without neglecting the importance of mitigating the effect of natural disasters. The new strategy pursued the following goals: to promote the sharing of responsibility and participation by the public and private sectors and civil society; to identify and disseminate information about the risks faced by communities; to strengthen applied research on technologies for mitigating risk; and to create a culture of self-protection. Given the importance of regional cooperation for disaster reduction, Mexico was participating actively in the work of a number of specialized regional mechanisms that were addressing the problem. Mexico endorsed the United Nations approach of giving priority to prevention.

2. **Ms. Zubčević** (Croatia), noting that her country was a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, said that there was a need for greater cooperation and complementarity in activities relating to those conventions, particularly at the national level. Her delegation welcomed the endorsement by the General Assembly of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 and its call for further action to ensure that the Programme was fully integrated into the mainstream of United Nations efforts aimed at attaining sustainable development. Croatia had great potential for producing energy from different renewable resources but, like many other countries in transition, it was faced with economic, legislative, development, financial, institutional, organizational and technical problems. Her delegation therefore welcomed the involvement of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in tackling those issues. Croatia had submitted renewable resource projects for application under the GEF-PDF-B Fund. It also welcomed a grant and a loan provided by the World Bank in the amount of $14 million for energy efficiency in Croatia, primarily for services and households.

3. Croatia endorsed the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development adopted in November 2002. It was keen to play an active part in international efforts aimed at finding practical solutions to problems created by climate change. In that regard, her country was undertaking measures to introduce a cleaner production strategy in its national economy, primarily through corporate responsibility. In particular, permanent monitoring of air quality had been established through the Air Quality Protection Act. Croatia was also a signatory of the Kyoto Protocol. Once the Protocol entered into force and was ratified by Parliament, Croatia would commit itself to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by 5 per cent in relation to the base year, over the commitment period 2008 to 2012. Croatia had issued its first national communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and welcomed the adoption of new guidelines for the preparation of second national communications.

4. The World Summit on Sustainable Development had clearly established the linkage between the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication. In January 2003, Croatia had commenced development of its national biosafety framework as part of the UNEP-GEF global project on the development of national biosafety frameworks. The

main objective of the project was to prepare Croatia for implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The total cost of the project was US$ 205,300, of which $136,800 were provided by GEF and the remainder by the Government of Croatia ($68,500).

5. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was an important tool for combating poverty. Croatia welcomed the increased synergies between it and the conventions on climate change and biological diversity. There should be a stronger focus on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). Within the context of the European region, Croatia supported strengthening of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Disaster Reduction.

6. Croatia had actively participated in the International Year of Mountains 2002 and was one of the 16 European countries that had established a national committee for the observance of the Year of Mountains, which should serve as a catalyst for long-term, concrete action for sustainable mountain development. Furthermore, there was a need for concerted synergistic implementation of the sustainable development framework, as provided for in Rio and Johannesburg, in order to ensure the attainment of international development goals, most notably those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

7. *Ms. Zubčević (Croatia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

8. **Mr. Muchemi** (Kenya) said that implementation of the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was crucial in reversing the current rate of biodiversity loss. Kenya, like other developing countries, had formulated a national biodiversity strategy and action plan, but its implementation had been constrained by the lack of resources. His delegation called on the international community to assist developing countries in carrying out their action plans. It was important to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources as agreed upon at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

9. The world community must help the poor economies develop their energy resources and services. Mobilization of adequate financial resources, enhanced capacity-building, promotion of partnership, transfer of appropriate technologies to developing countries and awareness creation were prerequisites for ensuring provision of affordable energy services. Kenya was currently preparing a national energy policy and strategy paper to address the issue of energy in relation to sustainable development. His delegation urged the international community to continue supporting the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in efforts to implement the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 and the Global Renewable Energy Education and Training (GREET) programme, particularly in Africa.

10. It was essential to formulate strategies for early warning systems, disaster preparedness and monitoring. His delegation called for a strengthened role of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) through provision of adequate resources to the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction. Disaster reduction efforts should be enhanced through the strengthening of national capacities, awareness creation, exchange of information and provision of additional financial resources.

11. The establishment of the Drought Monitoring Centre in Nairobi had greatly assisted various countries in the Horn of Africa in climate monitoring, prediction and early warning. His delegation hoped that the international community would provide the necessary assistance to the Centre to enable it to discharge its mandate effectively. The implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was crucial to addressing the challenges of desertification. Developing countries that were parties to the Convention had formulated national, subregional and regional action programmes to combat desertification. However, lack of resources and capacity at all levels had continued to constrain their successful implementation. The sessions of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD and its subsidiary bodies should be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations. His delegation welcomed the decision by the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to designate land degradation as one of its focal areas and to designate the Facility as a financial mechanism for the Convention. It also welcomed the recent relocation of the United Nations Development Programme's Drylands Development Centre to Nairobi.

12. All Member States must work in a cooperative manner to achieve the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Kenya was currently carrying out national programmes aimed at mitigating the effect of climate change. National

guidelines on activities implemented jointly under the Convention, including a Cleaner Development Mechanism (CDM) had been developed. His delegation called for enhanced support to developing countries to enable them to achieve the goals of the Convention.

13. An effective institutional framework at all levels was crucial to the full implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It was important to enhance the role of the institutions and organizations concerned with environment and sustainable development, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

14. **Mr. Hjálmarsson** (Iceland) said that the production of electricity through fossil fuels took an enormous toll on the environment and did not provide a lasting solution. Iceland was fortunate in having rich resources of clean renewable energy and was the only country in the Western world to produce 100 per cent of its electricity by renewable means, mainly by hydroelectricity. Electrical production in Iceland was totally carbon free. Some of the country's electricity was also obtained from geothermal sources. Indeed, 72 per cent of total energy needs were currently provided from renewable sources. The remaining 28 per cent of all primary energy used in Iceland was provided by hydrocarbons.

15. Further steps could nevertheless be taken to utilize the country's sustainable energy resources. For many years it had been the policy of the Government of Iceland to increase the use of renewable energy resources by offering Iceland as a site for power-intensive industries, thus decreasing the global pollution caused by energy production in other countries. Furthermore, Iceland had been looking for means to utilize its clean energy resources for powering vehicles and ships. In 1999, the Government had stated its intention to progress towards a sustainable hydrogen society. As a result of that policy, three hydrogen fuel cell buses were already operating in Reykjavik as part of the Ecological City Transport System Project (ECTOS), supported by the European Commission. Other parallel cooperation projects had already been initiated with a view to developing and introducing hydrogen as a fuel for ships and exploring possibilities for exporting it. A pioneering company, Icelandic New Energy, had been established in partnership with major international corporations that were using Iceland as an experimental ground for new technology in the field of hydrogen. The University of Iceland and Icelandic New Energy had received dozens of delegations from all over the world and were building up a network of contacts.

16. Cooperation with other countries and international corporations was needed to develop essential technology and applications. It was necessary to build up an international consensus for eco-friendly energy solutions to accelerate technical innovations and lower production costs. Therefore, Iceland's commitment to developing sustainable energy resources and its long-term interest in developing a hydrogen economy should be viewed in an international perspective. Iceland's transition to a hydrogen economy would not happen in isolation from the world at large. His country was looking forward to participating in the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy (IPHE) to be inaugurated in Washington in November at the initiative of the United States. The development of sustainable and non-polluting primary sources of energy would be a key element in the attainment of the goals set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The introduction of hydrogen as an energy carrier was an important step in extending the use of such energy sources.

17. **Mr. Kazemi-Kamyab** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the agenda of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should focus on implementation and capacity-building rather than on development of new policies, frameworks or concepts. On the question of new and renewable sources of energy, he said that the World Solar Programme should be strengthened and expanded in various countries where climatic conditions were favourable. The discussion on implementation of the conclusions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development should be pursued in the appropriate forum, namely the second cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Second Committee should avoid entering into substantive debate.

18. The decision of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held recently in Havana, represented a further step towards recognition of desertification as a global threat. His delegation welcomed the designation of GEF as the financial mechanism for UNCCD. The next step should be to bring financing into line with policy planning on desertification. That could be done by enhancing the

role of the Conference of the Parties as the leading policy planning entity in the area of land degradation and desertification, to provide guidance to GEF. His delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to provide funds for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies from the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

19. His delegation generally supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report on the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/58/191), in particular regarding the need to negotiate an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources and to reiterate the invitation to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to take appropriate steps in that regard. There should be continued cooperation among the different conventions relating to biodiversity. The recent entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was another important development, which should further promote the equitable sharing of the benefits of biotechnology and the preservation of genetic resources.

20. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) (A/58/277), he said that his delegation fully supported the comprehensive implementation of all components of disaster management. It was to be hoped that the Second International Conference on Early Warning would highlight more than before the importance of early warning, pave the way for monitoring disaster reduction and provide for effective measures to assist developing countries in managing natural disasters. With regard to paragraph 59 of the report, special attention should be paid to the many complexities and uncertainties involved in the link between natural disaster and climate change. His delegation looked forward to participating in the upcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

21. His delegation shared the views expressed in the report on the International Year of Mountains (A/58/134), on the need to continue the promotion of sustainable development in mountain areas beyond the Year. He supported the recommendations on advancing the objectives of the Year through various measures, such as strengthening of inter-agency collaboration, establishment of national committees and exchange of information. However, there might be some difficulties involved in exchanging information on transboundary mountain ranges. Moreover, developing countries would need international technical and technological support.

22. **Mr. Smaili** (Algeria) said that the struggle against desertification was one of the priority objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The fight against desertification and drought was beyond the capacity of any single country. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was an appropriate instrument for promoting sustainable development and eradicating poverty. Unless the problem of desertification and drought was addressed, it would be impossible to attain the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals agreed at various United Nations summits and conferences. The international community must assist with financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer in order to help the developing countries in that regard. The decision to make GEF a financing mechanism for the Convention to Combat Desertification was a step in the right direction. However, it was important to increase funding for GEF and to find other sources of financing, both multilateral and bilateral, for implementation of the Convention. Declaring 2004 as the international year of deserts and desertification would be an appropriate and timely step, as it would raise awareness and mobilize international public opinion about the challenge which desertification posed to the entire planet.

23. **Ms. von Lilien-Waldau** (International Fund for Agricultural Development), speaking on behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), said that the sixth session of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties had endorsed the operational strategy of the Global Mechanism to act as a broker between supply and demand and the need for a multifaceted approach to implementing that sustainable development convention. The Conference had requested the Global Mechanism to strengthen the supply side of its operations and its collaboration with the Facilitation Committee in order to ensure programmatic convergence, and the Committee had been called upon in turn to enhance its support of the Global Mechanism and the UNCCD objectives. The Global Mechanism and the Facilitation Committee had

then produced a business plan for 2004-2006 which specified targets for the Global Mechanism and committed the Facilitation Committee to take on greater responsibility for the implementation of the Convention.

24. Resource-mobilization and partnership-building were becoming the focus of the Global Mechanism's work, and the Facilitation Committee had increased its institutional commitment to support UNCCD implementation. IFAD itself had already enhanced its implementation support: over the past 25 years, nearly 50 per cent of its projects had included components to combat land degradation in developing countries and it was currently providing $75 million a year to support land and water management programmes. But IFAD had pledged to do more: it was exploring how to integrate the Global Mechanism more systematically in its field operations, policy development and advocacy; and an advisory group on collaboration with the Global Mechanism was to be established. IFAD had been encouraged by the general view at the Conference of the Parties that UNCCD was as much a development as an environment agreement: campaigns against poverty, hunger and environmental degradation were not competing interests but mutually reinforcing processes; for poorer people in rural areas, sustainable natural-resource management and social and economic development were part of one common agenda.

25. National Governments and the development community could not deliver development for poor people; instead, their responsibility was to identify partnerships and mobilize resources to increase the capacity of the rural poor. If the rural poor could be provided with the tools for prosperity, there would be a significant reduction of poverty. Both the Global Mechanism and IFAD were committed to working with all their partners for the achievement of the UNCCD goals.

26. **Ms. Freudenschuss-Reichl** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that the developing countries must be helped to meet their rising energy demands on a sustainable basis. Renewable energy sources, for example, would become affordable in developing countries only if developed countries increased their use of such sources. UNIDO was therefore looking forward to the International Conference for Renewable Energy in 2004 and was developing an investment model for building up the developing countries' capacity to manufacture renewable-energy equipment.

27. UNIDO had formulated comprehensive energy projects for rural areas of developing countries, and its energy programmes focused on various sources of renewable energy. Its Initiative on Rural Energy for Productive Use provided services in technical cooperation and project/programme design, capacity development and technology transfer, productive energy use, and financing mechanisms.

28. UNIDO regarded support for the UNFCCC negotiating process and the promotion of the Kyoto Protocol as high priorities; the objective was to accelerate the deployment of climate-friendly industrial technology. It was optimistic about the prospects for investment in greenhouse-gas abatement in developing countries under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and was providing assistance with methodological and institutional issues relating to project identification and development, transfer of technology and information, capacity-building and training, and advice on the needs of the parties to UNFCCC and the operational programmes of GEF.

29. UNIDO had formed public-private partnerships in many developing countries and had supported the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, establishing 10 national ozone units between 1993 and 2002. Capacity-building needs for the development of industrial CDM projects had been identified in Africa and Asia, and UNIDO had acquired a comprehensive picture of where it should concentrate its assistance in that area. It was currently holding meetings on technology transfer, industrial-energy efficiency and carbon financing in cooperation with the Austrian Government and the Climate Technology Initiative. UNIDO played an important role in delivering sustainable industrial growth based on environment-friendly technologies; it would continue to pursue its objectives of achieving sustainable development while preserving the environment.

30. **Mr. Al-Alawi** (Oman) said that only concerted efforts by the developed and developing countries would resolve the complex and interrelated environmental problems suffered by the latter. Swift action to ensure that those problems grew no worse was a shared responsibility, since the harmful effects of environmental pollution affected all countries, as illustrated by examples such as the ozone hole, global

warming and the shortage of drinking water. He therefore urged the developed countries to provide the finance and technology needed to help the developing countries tackle such challenges before the task became more onerous. The great importance which Oman attached to environmental issues was signalled by its commitment to the signature of all relevant conventions and to the principles adopted in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, which provided the scientific framework for the global partnership and communal responsibility relating to the environment and the protection of natural resources in the interest of sustainable development.

31. Oman had also acceded to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which it believed to be an effective tool. The efforts to prevent worsening of the desertification problem, however, would be incomplete without concrete international support and expertise provided by the United Nations, its specialized agencies and donor States. Established in 1989 and awarded by UNESCO, the biennial Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation offered further evidence of Oman's concern for the global environment. In Oman itself, Omani Environment Day was celebrated in January each year as an awareness-raising exercise. In conclusion, he commended the assistance provided to the developing countries in matters of training, scientific research, technology transfer and legislative drafting in connection with environmental protection and called on all States and relevant organizations to become involved in the important partnership to that end.

32. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the growing problem of desertification and drought remained a major obstacle to Africa's development and contributed to the impoverishment of its peoples. SADC supported the view that combating desertification was an important means of eradicating poverty and it welcomed the outcome of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties. It also welcomed the Conference's decision to make GEF a financial mechanism of the Convention and urged the two secretariats to expedite the memorandum of understanding.

33. Everyone had a responsibility to support and ensure sufficient resources for implementation of UNCCD. The Johannesburg Summit had recognized that the convention was an essential tool for addressing poverty eradication; its implementation would make an immense contribution to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. SADC had itself taken notable strides in promoting the UNCCD ideals, in particular by designating the Gobabeb Training and Research Centre in Namibia as the SADC centre of excellence for training its citizens to combat desertification. It called on the international community to support the formulation of the national action programmes of the SADC countries and such undertakings as the NEPAD Environment Initiative and to design a concrete mechanism to address all aspects of drought and desertification.

34. SADC supported the designation of 2004 as the international year of deserts and desertification and reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of UNCCD.

35. **Mr. Rim** Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that, despite the reaffirmation of the international commitment to Agenda 21 at the Johannesburg Summit, 2.5 billion people still had no access to safe drinking water or adequate sanitation, and attempts to restrain the development of the developing countries persisted. Sustainable development was not a monopoly of one side, and the most urgent issue for the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was to create a political environment favourable to sustainable development in the developing countries. Genuine international cooperation in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter was vital; the imposition of values and conditions on development was a challenge to international relations, which should be based on equality of sovereignty.

36. The developed countries would have to provide the developing countries with financial and technical assistance on preferential terms and take steps to relieve or eliminate the debt burden. Encroachments on the sovereignty and the right to development of other countries by imposition of sanctions and blockades should be terminated immediately. It was essential to respect the authority and strengthen the role of the United Nations system in tackling the challenges of sustainable development, with priority given to water supply, sanitation and human settlements.

37. His Government attached priority to environmental protection and had made considerable efforts over the past year in such areas as tree planting, housing construction, and redirection of rivers, including the completion of a waterway project with financial support from the OPEC Fund. It would continue to work with the international community to achieve the goals set in Johannesburg through the effective use of its domestic resources and sustainable economic activities.

38. **Mr. Jose** (India) said that the Johannesburg Summit had highlighted the need to integrate the objectives of the Convention on Biodiversity into global, regional and national programmes and policies and had made a commitment to reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010, a goal included in the strategic plan adopted at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. As one of the 12 mega-biodiversity countries, India had introduced a series of measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. International cooperation was needed to strengthen the monitoring of biopiracy and ensure the equitable sharing of benefits from the use of biological and genetic resources. The decision of the Johannesburg Summit to negotiate an international regime to that end was therefore welcome.

39. India was in favour of an effective system for the protection of biodiversity and the associated traditional knowledge. The system for the protection of intellectual property rights should not displace the developing countries as competitors and transform them into mere suppliers of raw materials, and the patenting of biological resources must not restrict their access to their own biological resources. India had ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and hoped that it would enable States parties to protect their biodiversity against the risks posed by modified organisms.

40. India had always argued for strengthening global cooperation to address environmental problems. It had ratified UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol and called on other countries to do likewise. Progress towards the entry into force of the Protocol was essential if further steps for the implementation of the Convention were to be considered during the second commitment period. The Johannesburg Summit had recognized that climate-change issues were a common concern for humankind and for sustainable development. India had hosted the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC, which had addressed the Johannesburg mandate in concrete ways, including the adoption of the New Delhi five-year work programme and the Ministerial Declaration establishing the link between climate change and sustainable development. India was deeply committed to sustainable development and had one of the world's most active renewable-energy programmes, promoting various energy efficiency measures in a number of sectors.

41. India attached considerable importance to UNCCD and welcomed the GEF decision to include land degradation as a focal area and to designate GEF as a financial mechanism for UNCCD; it also welcomed the conclusions reached at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It supported the convening of an international conference to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

42. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin) said that desertification or land degradation was a development problem which caused poverty among thousands of people throughout the world. Economic and social problems such as food security, water resources and migration were closely related to land degradation. Although people wanted to live in a healthy environment while using the natural resources in a rational manner, extreme poverty had forced them to put in place survival strategies that were harmful to potential natural resources. In that regard, pursuant to article 18 of the United Nations Convention on Desertification, appropriate means should be made available to grass-roots communities to combat desertification, including through the ownership of endogenous know-how.

43. Her delegation welcomed the decision by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its sixth session to make GEF the financial mechanism of the Convention. While her delegation welcomed the fact that 37 per cent of the GEF budget for 2003-2005 of $500 million would be spent on sustainable land development and human and institutional capacity-building, and that the other 63 per cent would be used for implementing innovative and local sustainable land management policies, it believed that much more needed to be done to mobilize resources for soil and water resources conservation projects and activities.

44. She urged all the development partners, as well as agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations

and the Bretton Woods institutions to integrate the Convention on Desertification in their poverty reduction strategies in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. She also reiterated the appeal to the private sector and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to provide greater financial resources to the countries most affected by desertification.

45. **Mr. Empole Losoko Efambe** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that, while it was gratifying to note that many countries had acceded to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and had ratified the Kyoto Protocol, much still remained to be done. Greater international cooperation on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was required. In that regard, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should be enlarged to include all States Members of the United Nations. International cooperation in the area of environmental protection should focus on the development and dissemination of innovative technologies, economic diversification and the strengthening of regional, national and local sustainable development bodies, since that would help developing countries to better cope with the problems created by climate change. The countries of the North had a moral responsibility to provide financial and scientific assistance to the countries of the South in developing effective and appropriate national sustainable development strategies for key sectors, especially education, which would heighten public awareness of the problem of biological diversity and the conservation of ecosystems.

46. Referring to his country's seven national parks, four of which had been declared world heritage sites, he reiterated his Government's call for the establishment of a United Nations fund to make reparations for the destruction wrought by the long war. Noting that 50 per cent of Africa's fresh water resources were in his country, which also had the largest expanse of tropical forests in Africa, accounting for 6 per cent of world tropical forest reserves and 12.5 per cent of the world's tropical rain forests, he said that the financing by the international community of local and national poverty reduction projects for the indigenous populations who were making enormous sacrifices to preserve and protect those forests for the benefit of mankind would be a just recompense. His delegation supported the financing of studies aimed at the prevention of disasters and urged the international community to support the GEF Fund, the Fund for the Least Developed Countries and the Least Developed Countries Trust Fund for Climate Change, which was unfortunately not yet operational.

47. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) said that land degradation, deforestation and desertification affected a third of the earth's surface area and nearly 900 million people, most of whom lived in the poorest countries, especially in Africa. As a result of repeated droughts and human activities, his country's natural resources were deteriorating rapidly. Accordingly, measures had been taken by both the public and private sectors with a view to the preservation of the environment and development. Combating desertification, sustainable forestry resource management and environmental preservation were top priorities for his Government. The objectives of the country's national plan of action to combat desertification included the sustainable and integrated management of resources to promote food security, improving the economic environment with a view to eliminating poverty and enhancing knowledge of desertification by monitoring and evaluating the effects of drought. Civil society, including non-governmental organizations and environmental associations, were heavily involved in operations on the ground. Burkina Faso participated actively in several regional initiatives to combat desertification and was a member of various regional institutions, including the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

48. The international community must give higher priority to efforts to combat desertification by actively supporting the implementation of the Convention on Desertification and providing assistance in the area of capacity-building and financial assistance to seriously affected countries, especially African countries. He welcomed the financial support provided by GEF for activities to combat desertification, deforestation and land degradation and urged the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention on Desertification to continue their cooperation, since such cooperation promoted synergies for mobilizing resources in support of the goals of the three conventions. The establishment of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention on Desertification as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties was vital to the regular

monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. Lastly, he welcomed the recommendation of the UNEP Governing Council that the General Assembly should consider declaring an international year of deserts and desertification as soon as possible.

49. **Mr. Ito** (Japan) said that the international community must take action if the provisions of Agenda 21 were to become a reality. Noting that the Johannesburg Summit was an important milestone from that viewpoint, he said that Japan had taken a number of concrete actions, including the hosting of the third World Water Forum in Kyoto. Disaster was the biggest enemy of sustainable development. Although earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and storms continued to cause enormous damage to people and the environment in every corner of the globe, each country had a wealth of knowledge — indigenous, traditional or modern — to combat natural disasters. Japan had learned terrible lessons from its many experiences with natural disasters, including earthquakes, typhoons and volcanic eruptions. All Governments must share such collective wisdom in order to build a safer world; however, they should first include those lessons learned in their development strategy. The General Assembly should adopt a resolution allowing the United Nations to hold a world conference on disaster reduction to conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy, upgrade it to reflect fully the guiding principles of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and identify specific policy measures to put it into effect. Japan would like to host such a conference in Kobe, Hyogo, from 18 to 22 January 2005. The conference would afford the international community an opportunity to listen to the people of Hyogo, who had experienced a severe disaster and had struggled to rebuild their lives and their city.

50. Referring to climate change, he strongly urged Member States to conclude the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible, as a significant first step towards strengthening international actions to combat climate change. Noting that global participation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions was of vital importance in achieving the ultimate goal of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and ensuring the effectiveness of action against climate change, he said that a set of common rules must be established to govern the participation of all countries in that endeavour. In that connection, it was extremely important to build confidence between developed and developing countries. The early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and concrete measures by the developed countries to fulfil their commitments would definitely enhance such confidence. Moreover, concrete actions had already been taken by developing countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Japan, for its part, would continue to support such efforts through activities such as Clean Development Mechanism projects and capacity-building. Lastly, on the issue of financing conference services for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which the budget proposal had made no provision, his delegation agreed that the United Nations should make a continuing commitment to provide such services to the Framework Convention within the context of their institutional linkage.

51. **Mr. Singh** (Observer for the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)) said that participants at the recently concluded Fifth World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, had drafted a message to the upcoming Seventh Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The message stressed the importance of protected areas for sustainable development and poverty eradication. It urged Parties to the Convention to make a strong political commitment to achieving the World Summit on Sustainable Development goal of a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, including by identifying and filling in existing gaps in global protected areas using systems based on sound science; establishing mechanisms to ensure equal participation and sharing of the benefits of protected areas, particularly among indigenous peoples and local communities; and creating the appropriate enabling environment involving institutional and human resources as well as legal frameworks to manage protected areas.

52. Furthermore, IUCN, through its partnership with UNEP, had produced the new United Nations List of Protected Areas, which offered the first comprehensive review of the global protected area estate since 1997. The Congress had also adopted the Durban Accord and the Durban Action Plan. Technical workshops during the Congress had developed a number of specific recommendations reflecting the importance of engaging with the broad range of people who influenced or were influenced by protected areas; the recognition that protected areas provided a number of

valuable ecosystem services; and the importance of providing practical tools, guidelines and training for protected area decision makers and managers. One recommendation had endorsed the establishment of a representative network of mountain protected areas as a vital step towards sustainable mountain development.

53. **Mr. Shin** Boo Nam (Republic of Korea), noting that environmental degradation was one of the most serious challenges to efforts to raise standards of living around the world through economic and social development, said it was encouraging to note that, since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, many activities had been undertaken to implement the commitments of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation at the national, regional and global levels. Indeed, increasing the use of new and renewable sources of energy would increase access to modern energy services for the poor, helping to meet rising energy demands, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, eliminate pollutant emissions from fossil fuel use and replace depleted fossil fuel resources. While his delegation welcomed international efforts to increase the use of new and renewable energy sources, including the 23 partnership initiatives for sustainable development launched at the Johannesburg Summit, there were limitations to the use of such forms of energy. They included the higher prices of renewable energy relative to fossil fuel energy, the lack of information and knowledge about new and renewable sources of energy, the enormous expense of developing the relevant technologies and facilities, and the difficulty of marketing such technologies.

54. Those problems should be solved by adjusting the energy price structure and internalizing the social costs generated from emissions of air pollutants in accordance with the use of fossil fuel energy, establishing a mechanism for the exchange of information and knowledge through international cooperation, sharing the investment burden through the expansion of public-private joint projects and providing finance and tax incentives for relevant technology and facility development.

55. In his delegation's view, the current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption whereby 15 per cent of the world population accounted for 56 per cent of the world's total consumption, while the poorest 40 per cent accounted for only 11 per cent of consumption, should be changed in order to achieve sustainable development worldwide. In that regard, his Government would host in Seoul from 6 to 7 November 2003 the Asia-Pacific Regional Expert Meeting on a Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production. As far as efforts to ensure environmental preservation and sustainable development were concerned, his Government had recently deposited with the Secretary-General its instrument of ratification of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. It was currently undertaking preparatory procedures for the ratification of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

56. **Mr. Toscano** (Switzerland) said that social and economic development should be promoted simultaneously with environmental protection in the pursuit of sustainable development.

57. Climate change induced by human activity posed a serious threat to current and future generations everywhere. Switzerland attached great importance to international cooperation in the fight against climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 2001, even before ratifying the Kyoto Protocol in 2003, his Government had enacted legislation to reduce domestic emissions of greenhouse gases by 10 per cent by 2010. Through its domestic policy and international initiatives on energy, Switzerland fully supported the goals and principles of the Johannesburg Plan of Action and the promotion of renewable sources of energy to eliminate greenhouse gases and pollutants. He invited industrialized countries which had not yet done so to ratify the Protocol and adopt the appropriate measures to reduce emissions.

58. The results achieved under the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction had been encouraging, and he welcomed efforts to raise the profile of the secretariat of the Strategy in its work on risk management. Collaboration with UNDP and other organizations or global initiatives in disaster reduction had been strengthened through various instruments, and it was hoped that guidelines on the establishment of national platforms would be finalized for their early implementation in the field.

59. Switzerland attached great importance to lessons learned and shared the concern about the growing number of disasters associated with extreme weather events. It was crucial for the international community

to strengthen cooperation in dealing with the causes of such hazards.

60. While progress had been made in the area of biological diversity, ecosystems worldwide continued to be degraded at an accelerated pace. The preservation of biological diversity was a prerequisite for sustainable development and, as such, one of the greatest challenges of modern times. His delegation therefore attached priority to the elaboration of an action plan, within the Convention on Biological Diversity, to curb the loss of biological diversity by 2010. Switzerland also looked forward to the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which would contribute to the ecologically sound management of biotechnology and to the protection of biological diversity worldwide. His Government would follow with great interest the negotiations, mentioned in paragraph 75 (c) of document A/58/191, on an international regime to promote access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of those resources.

61. His delegation was pleased that the sustainable development of mountain regions had been included on the agenda of the Committee, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/245, and welcomed the broad support for the International Year of Mountains, 2002. In that context, the launching of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions offered encouraging prospects. The recent meeting of the members of the Partnership had again demonstrated their will to develop an innovative, transparent, flexible and participatory relationship. Switzerland believed that the sustainable development of mountain regions should remain a current item even beyond the commemoration of the International Year, and hoped that the current session of the General Assembly would adopt a resolution to that effect.

62. **Mr. Di Leva** (World Bank) said that Bank sources had shown that, despite progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, development assistance was at its lowest level. Rich countries spent $300 billion a year on agricultural subsidies, $600 billion on defence, but only $56 billion on aid.

63. Ensuring environmental sustainability would require universal support for global environmental conventions. He outlined the World Bank's intention to substantially increase both its environmental lending portfolio and its portfolio pertaining to water, sanitation and flood prevention over the next fiscal year. Overall, the Bank's active portfolio of projects with major environmental components was expected to reach over $13 billion.

64. Through mainstreaming of environmental concerns into the Bank's operations, a full range of projects had achieved the objectives of the global environmental conventions, whether they were specifically tied to a convention or more broadly applicable to the environment as a whole. In that context, three major strategy papers for water, forests and rural development had been endorsed, signalling the Bank's commitment to increase funding for environmental protection and sustainable development.

65. He further described other collaborative efforts undertaken by the Bank to address new GEF focal areas, combat global warming and climate change, and support the Convention on Biological Diversity.

66. The World Bank was currently the single largest international funding source for projects on biological diversity, and had sought to focus on the role of biodiversity and livelihoods. It had also expanded the linkage between forests and biodiversity protection and carbon sequestration, providing a major meeting ground for biodiversity and climate regimes. The relationship between biodiversity protection and the emerging forms of biotechnology was also a growing segment of the Bank's work.

67. By 2025 half of the world's population would live under severe water stress. Since the 1950s, the World Bank had used its good offices to mediate water disputes, and had continued working among riparian Governments to address transboundary issues. He noted that many developing countries had made progressive efforts to reform their laws and policies relating to water in order to enhance sustainability and to improve water supply and sanitation.

68. It had been estimated that several hundred multilateral environmental agreements were in operation. While not all of them had their own financial mechanisms, the Bank, GEF and other partners sought to support them. Since its inception, the World Bank had been committed to supporting the aspirations of member States as reflected in their support for the global conventions.

69. **Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the members of the Andean Community, said that although its member States were among the countries with the most biologically diverse flora and fauna, a number of factors, motivated primarily by poverty, threatened their status as a global "epicentre" of biodiversity.

70. Since 1999, the Andean Community had initiated a process of cooperation to promote the use of biological diversity for social and economic development, based on sustainable criteria, with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank. Detailing the results of the process, he described the Regional Strategy on Biodiversity, adopted by the Andean Council of Foreign Ministers, and a memorandum of understanding between the Andean Community and a Washington-based non-governmental organization.

71. Turning to disaster reduction, he noted that developing countries were predominantly affected by the growing incidence of natural disasters. Poverty increased the vulnerability of population groups and exposed them to risks and natural hazards. The need to survive often led to overexploitation of natural resources, which in turn resulted in environmental degradation. Moreover, while material damage caused by natural disasters limited economic development opportunities, their social consequences had created even greater social imbalances. Facing more frequent and intense natural disasters, compounded by the effects of climate change, societies were becoming less capable of withstanding the environmental, social and economic impact of natural disasters. With the occurrence of phenomena such as El Niño, which directly affected the countries of the Andean region, it was necessary to consider an integrated, comprehensive strategy for humanitarian assistance and disaster response which also contemplated action designed to mitigate the causes.

72. The members of the Andean Community had established the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Assistance to promote risk reduction, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and information exchange. Within the context of risk management, it was particularly important to incorporate the transborder aspect of natural disasters, and to formulate responses which were subregional, regional and international in scope. The objectives of effective disaster reduction and response mechanisms could be attained only through international cooperation in technical, scientific and financial areas, as established under the Johannesburg Plan of Action. The Andean Community expressed its wholehearted support for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, scheduled for 2005, which would present a unique opportunity to advance the definition of instruments and specific measures to fulfil the objectives established at Johannesburg.

73. **Mr. Duijsens** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), focusing on risk and disaster reduction as a condition for sustainable development, presented a number of facts, including statistical data, on the changing nature of disasters and their impact on society. Irrespective of the form in which disasters occurred, they all represented setbacks to the development of countries, communities and individuals. Poor infrastructural planning, environmental degradation and disease increased potential risks in many areas.

74. The conventional view that disasters were temporary interruptions on the path to social and economic development, to be dealt with through humanitarian relief, was no longer credible. Rather, investments in development should be protected against the risk of disaster. Strengthening the resilience of communities and mitigating the effects of disasters was first and foremost a task for each Government, but effective cooperation by a broad range of actors was also required. As independent auxiliaries to public authorities, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies played a critical role linking Governments to civil society.

75. The Federation wished to urge Governments to take a long-term perspective and integrated approach to disasters, to ensure that geopolitical factors did not determine the risk reduction agenda, and to support the International Disaster Response Law project. The project sought to identify and compile the laws, principles and practices relating to international disaster response. Improving awareness and implementation of existing disaster response law could ensure that lives could be saved and dignity restored quickly and efficiently.

76. The importance that the Federation attached to disaster preparedness would be further demonstrated at the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which was expected to bring together

high-level representatives of the Federation with the States parties to the Geneva Conventions. The Federation strongly believed that, considering the apparent likelihood of increased incidence of extreme weather events, continued population growth, urbanization, and prevalence of infectious disease, the international community could respond effectively to the challenge and reverse the trend of disaster and suffering.

77. **Ms. Al-Suwaidi** (United Arab Emirates) said that, in spite of numerous major international conferences on environment and development, human activity continued to damage the environment, with considerable impact on the lives of millions of people. National, regional and international strategies for the implementation of conference recommendations could help to establish new practices which guaranteed protection of ecological systems and efficient management of natural resources.

78. The Government of the United Arab Emirates had introduced a comprehensive national strategy to enact new by-laws and regulations to enhance environmental protection and to develop social, cultural and economic activities. A number of programmes in favour of rural development and forestry had been launched, despite the difficulties posed by the scarcity of water and severe weather conditions. Those projects had also focused on raising public awareness in the areas of agriculture, food production and environmental conservation. Research on the protection of endangered species had been supported by the Government, which had also introduced legislation on the protection of the marine environment.

79. Convinced of the universal desire to resolve environmental threats, the United Arab Emirates would continue to cooperate with regional and international organizations engaged in activities to improve the environment. Her Government called for enhanced assistance to developing and post-conflict countries to enable them to carry out necessary reforms in their environmental and economic institutions, and to address related social issues.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/58/SR.14

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Second Committee

Summary record of the 14th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 17 October 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:	Mr. Chowdhury	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mrs. Zubčević (Vice-Chairperson)	(Croatia)
later:	Mr. Chowdhury	(Bangladesh)

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Agenda item 98: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) *(continued)*

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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03-56521 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 92: Sectoral policy questions:preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of funds of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin *(continued)*

Draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.2

1 **Mr. Benmellouk** (Morocco), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the proposed text noted the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Negotiation of a Convention against Corruption, encouraged the Member States to participate in the Conference to be held in Mexico for the purpose of signing the convention, invited the Member States to enact laws to prevent corrupt practices and the transfer of illicitly acquired assets and to ensure the return of such assets to the countries of origin, and stressed the importance of regional and subregional cooperation. He amended the text by adding the words "where appropriate" after the words "regional and subregional cooperation", and expressed the hope that the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 94: Environment and sustainable development (continued) (A/58/125, A/58/204)

(a) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 *(continued)* (A/58/164)

(b) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa *(continued)* (A/58/158)

(c) Convention on Biological Diversity *(continued)* (A/58/191)

(e) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction *(continued)* (A/58/277)

(f) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind *(continued)* (A/58/308)

(g) Sustainable mountain development *(continued)* (A/58/134)

2 **Mr. Heinbecker** (Canada) said that the Convention to Combat Desertification, which had been adopted ten years earlier, could be an effective poverty reduction and sustainable development mechanism but that its implementation continued to be sidetracked by political and institutional problems. Desertification was a real problem that demanded real action, and Canada, committed to ensuring that resources were channelled effectively to meet the objectives that had been set, wished to voice its concern at the lack of transparency in the management of the resources of the Secretariat of the Convention. The Canadian Government had a legal and moral obligation to its taxpayers, and advocated raising the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the Secretariat of the Convention.

3 In the absence of the Chairman, **Mrs. Zubčević** (Croatia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

4 **Mr. Sopoaga** (Tuvalu) said that seeking new and renewable energy sources was indispensable for small developing island states such as Tuvalu, which depended almost exclusively on imported oil and petroleum products. The resultant savings could be invested in areas such as industry, education and employment. In respect of climate change, Tuvalu was particularly threatened by the rise of the sea level. In fact, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions was therefore a survival issue for low-lying islands and archipelagos. Tuvalu was pleased that some States had ratified the Kyoto protocol, whose early entry into force was vital. As a member of the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition, Tuvalu looked forward to participating in the International Conference for Renewable Energy to be held in Germany in 2004 and stressed the necessity of financial assistance to enable developing countries to participate in seminars and conferences on climate change. Without such funding, small developing island states would be able to provide little input and that could seriously undermine the process.

5 **Mr. Paudel** (Nepal) said that Nepal was committed to promoting sustainable development and protecting the environment, particularly the forest coverage, watershed and the national parks. Poverty, burgeoning population, increasing urbanization and development activities had taken a heavy toll on the environment. The Government of Nepal had pursued a development strategy according highest priority to poverty reduction and people's participation. A Maoist insurgency had emerged approximately seven years

earlier, just when reform measures undertaken by the Government had begun to bear fruit, and was destroying the country's infrastructure, aggravating the problems of development and environmental protection. The Government needed resources to combat terror, reduce poverty, provide education and health care to all, create employment and procure environment-friendly technologies. Without additional resources, Nepal would not be able to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the goal of halving poverty by 2015. Nepal therefore urged the international community to provide developing countries with additional resources extending official development aid and debt relief, opening their markets, and dismantling their farm subsidies. It was also imperative to take immediate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to curb the depletion of non-renewable resources. The burden of protecting the world environment was a responsibility of the community of nations and therefore Nepal supported an early entry into force of the Kyoto protocol and other global treaties.

6. **Ms. Rivero** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the Member States of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, expressed satisfaction at the entry into effect of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and asked the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to take the measures that were necessary in view of the adoption of an international instrument for a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological and genetic resources. Regarding climate change, the representative regretted that many of the countries mainly responsible for greenhouse gas emissions failed to meet their obligations in that area, and demanded urgent ratification of the Kyoto protocol. The MERCOSUR countries were prepared to study the conclusions of the Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/58/277). Concerned over the negative consequences of increased ultraviolet radiation on the flora and fauna, they asked for a rigorous implementation of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. They supported the activities of the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, because man-induced loss of soil productivity and vegetation as a result of climate change was an object of concern to the region.

7. The MERCOSUR States, like all developing countries, were troubled by discrimination in the application of the principles of environmental protection, a situation that had been apparent in the recent failure of the Cancun Conference, where the industrialized countries had found pretexts to maintain agricultural subsidies and non-tariff barriers that distorted trade and caused irreparable damage to the environment by encouraging agricultural productivism. There was an obvious link between poverty, desertification and climate change and it was therefore important to implement conventions acknowledging the top priority of economic and social development and poverty reduction for developing countries.

8. The MERCOSUR States were pleased about the constructive work of UNEP in the area of environmental law, in particular under the 1981 Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law. They were however concerned over the amount of the resources earmarked for the period 2004-2005 in the programme budget for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and hoped that the General Assembly would approve the funds necessary for the Convention and its subsidiary bodies to function adequately.

9. **Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa) said that the implementation of decisions taken by the international community in the area of the conservation and management of the world's natural resources fell short of expectations. Greenhouse gas emissions were on the rise, while soil degradation, biodiversity decline and desertification had not abated. The recent Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification had highlighted the challenges faced as a result of desertification by many developing countries, particularly South Africa, 90 percent of whose territory could be classified as arid, semi-arid or dry sub-humid. The international community should therefore increase its support for the Convention by mobilizing adequate financial resources to assist developing countries with the implementation of their national action plans. South Africa had ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and believed that the next Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity should negotiate an international instrument for a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological and genetic resources.

10. In September 2003, South Africa had hosted in Durban the Fifth World Parks Congress, which had brought the importance of natural parks and protected areas to the attention of the international community. Regarding climate change, which threatened especially the sustainable development and the growth prospects of developing countries, South Africa urged the States that had not yet done so to ratify the Kyoto protocol. South Africa was committed to increasing the share of renewable energy in its total energy mix in order to improve access to energy, as an important element in poverty reduction. By taking measures in four areas - launching financial instruments, establishing an effective legal system, ensuring technology development and building capacities - the Government expected to promote the use of renewable energy, in particular from solar, wind, hydro and biomass sources.

11. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) stressed that life in all its forms was in danger and that as time passed common action on a global level was becoming more urgent. Azerbaijan's biodiversity was remarkable and represented a real potential whose protection was a national, regional and even global responsibility. However, these resources had not enabled Azerbaijan, which was beset by armed conflict, to emerge from a period of transition. Occupation of part of its territory and population displacements, after a period in which industry and agriculture had developed without consideration of such issues, had accelerated environmental degradation.

12. The Government of Azerbaijan was strongly committed to environmental protection and sustainable development. Security, stability, peace, respect for human rights and good governance were prerequisites for sustainable development. Political will and propitious international conditions were prerequisites for trust in international cooperation. Since 1995, Azerbaijan had launched several development initiatives, strengthened its legislation and given high priority under its national programmes to economic, social, environmental, agricultural, scientific and educational issues. Implementation of those programmes was expected not only to build the capacities of the Government in environmental management but also to improve the living conditions of the population and to prevent further degradation of the environment.

13. Azerbaijan believed that greater attention should be paid to the effects of desertification and drought, and stressed the key role of the Convention to Combat Desertification. It was further necessary to coordinate the implementation of that Convention, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development should continue. Azerbaijan had ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2000 and set up a State commission on biological and genetic resources, which was responsible for implementing commitments under the Convention. The Government, assisted by local communities, had accelerated its public awareness campaign.

14. Aware of the intimate linkage between biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction, the Government of Azerbaijan believed that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity should be mainstreamed into the development strategies. Scientific and technical cooperation in that area should be strengthened with a view to building national research and assessment capacities.

15. The Government of Azerbaijan wished to establish protected areas but had been deprived of the right to exploit its own biological resources. Although no precise information was available on the status of one fourth of its forests - including State preserves and protected areas - that was under Armenian occupation, it seemed that massive felling continued. Azerbaijan recognized that it had a responsibility to preserve its biodiversity but was unfortunately unable to meet that obligation. The international community should urgently take effective steps to enable States to fully exercise their sovereign rights over the resources. In that connection, the representative of Azerbaijan appealed to the United Nations and to the international community to make every effort to ensure that the conflict between Armenia and her country would be resolved as soon as possible.

16. **Ms. Bovi** (San Marino) thanked the General-General for his exhaustive and useful Report on the Promotion of New and Renewable Sources of Energy, including Implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005. In recent years, San Marino had noted with satisfaction that interest in the rational use of natural resources, in accordance with the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, had been growing. In that spirit, San Marino had ratified the Convention on Biological

Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification.

17. Believing that the use of new and renewable sources of energy could be further improved, San Marino supported the implementation of specific programmes and projects aimed at ensuring adequate energy services and a rational exploitation of existing and new sources of energy to alleviate poverty, especially in developing countries.

18. Cooperation among all countries on all levels and their commitment to adopt a new approach to development and environmental protection were key factors in the success of such initiatives. Cooperation could be made more effective by setting up a body exclusively responsible for coordinating the collection and dissemination of know-how and information on new scientific discoveries in order to make new sources of energy accessible to all countries.

19. While safeguarding the environment was an asset of key importance to the welfare of a country and that, as part of a long-term strategy, it ensured future generations better health and living conditions, San Marino was convinced that in the past the environment had played a secondary role in the activities of the United Nations. San Marino supported wholeheartedly the World Solar Programme and the principles enunciated in the Millennium Declaration, and hoped that does principles would soon be given the attention they deserve from all States, through global cooperation in the interest of all.

20. **Mr. Choon** (Malaysia) said that his country associated itself with the statement made the previous day by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Conservation of biological diversity remained one of the top priorities of Malaysia, to which the increasing loss of biological diversity was of considerable concern. As a member of the group of Like-Minded Megadiversity Countries, Malaysia felt that it had a special responsibility in that regard and in respect of the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological and genetic resources. Malaysia had taken steps to protect biological diversity by ensuring that its development strategies were implemented in a sustainable manner.

21. Convinced that biological resources had a great potential for industry, Malaysia believed that the evolution of technologies in that area should continue to be monitored to prevent possible adverse effects on the conservation and rational use of biological diversity. Therefore Malaysia supported the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and welcomed its recent entry into force, a significant development in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

22. Malaysia welcomed Resolution 57/260, in which the General Assembly had reiterated the importance of the decision of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization to examine, through the World Trade Organization Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, the relationship between the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects on Intellectual Property Rights and the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the protection of traditional knowledge. That would ensure that action would be taken to implement the commitment to promote a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological and genetic resources. Such an objective would best be achieved through an international system of accessing and sharing those benefits.

23. The reaffirmation by the World Summit on Sustainable Development of the fact that the Convention on Biological Diversity constituted "the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources" was a welcomed indication of growing awareness of the importance of biodiversity. Malaysia would therefore like to remind the Member States of the commitment they had made at that Summit to pursue a more efficient implementation of the three objectives of the Convention and to reduce significantly the rate of loss of biological diversity. To that end, it was imperative that the international community provided technical and financial support. In that connection, the Secretariat of the Convention and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) secretariat should intensify their cooperation toward enhancing the effectiveness of the financial mechanism in assisting developing countries to implement the Convention.

24. Malaysia noted the progress achieved in that area subsequent to the various related meetings organized in 2003 and welcomed the Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/58/191). It warned however that the international community should not rest on its laurels but should

continue to strive for sustainable development, which was of paramount importance for poverty reduction.

25. **Mr. Chidyausiku** (Zimbabwe) said that it was necessary to increase substantially and urgently the share of energy obtained from renewable energy sources. The Johannesburg declaration had set clear and ambitious time-bound national targets for increasing renewable energy production. The partnerships for sustainable development resulting from the World Summit on Sustainable Development had heightened the interest in renewable energy sources. The World Solar Programme (A/58/164) had gained new impetus as a result of its recognition by the Summit as one of the necessary tools of the Plan of Implementation.

26. The partnerships identified in the World Summit and the commitments made in Johannesburg had set the stage for public-private cooperation on rural energy development, innovative financial instruments for private sector involvement in that area and progress in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit. The international community should effectively link the targets, timetables and commitments on resources and technology formulated at the World Summit with country-specific programmes to ensure that Agenda 21 and the goals of Johannesburg became a reality.

27. Zimbabwe fully endorsed the principle formulated by New Partnership for Africa's Development, according to which energy was the engine for development and the search for cheap energy called for the development of solar energy resources, abundant in Africa. Zimbabwe had a relatively high solar energy potential and considerable experience with renewable energy technologies. Increased use of energy from renewable sources was one way to improve access to energy services and to reliable, affordable, economically viable and environmentally sound energy resources. It was therefore necessary to accelerate the implementation of programmes that led to curbing or reversing environmental degradation, particularly in developing countries.

28. Since the World Summit for Sustainable Development, there had been an increase in the number of initiatives, including the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition and the financing of projects in developing countries by the Global Environment Fund (GEF). The Zimbabwe delegation wished to pay tribute to UNESCO for its Global renewable energy, education and training programme and welcomed the decision by the Government of Germany to host the International Conference for Renewable Energy in June 2004. There was need for a comprehensive review of the World Solar Programme to identify its strengths and shortcomings. Member States had failed to convene a second World Solar Summit because of the prohibitive cost of hosting a Summit of such magnitude, but the ongoing restructuring of the World Solar Commission with the help of UNESCO was an attempt to reflect the concerns of all stakeholders in renewable energy.

29. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh), Chairman, resumed the Chair.

30. **Mr. Al-Haddad** (Yemen) said that Yemen considered new and renewable sources of energy as being particularly important for reducing poverty and therefore believed that greater use should be made of those sources. It supported the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development, especially with regard to the diversification of energy sources and the development of alternative technologies. It was particularly interested in the component related to assistance to developing countries and to policies aimed at enabling them to use the new and renewable sources of energy and to access financial institutions, in particular the Global Environment Fund (GEF). Such measures would provide the least developed countries (LDCs) and the developing countries as a whole with financial resources, meet their needs in training and technical know-how and help their institutions to strengthen their activities in that area.

31. Yemen was one of the countries that suffered from desertification. In fact, sand covered much of its territory, especially in the East, the North East and its entire coastline. In those regions, the winds drove the sand toward the agricultural areas, causing the arable areas to recede and increasing the cost of their maintenance. Poverty was thereby aggravated. The country also suffered from hydric erosion. The representative of Yemen therefore wished to draw the attention of the Second Committee, the organizations of the United Nations system and the financial institutions on that issue so that the latter might fund studying and solving the problem.

32. As part to the follow-up to the World Summit for Sustainable Development and to the Second GEF

Assembly, both of which had dealt with the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, Yemen noted that was responsible for that implementation and urged the GEF Council to take an appropriate decision at its forthcoming meeting in Washington, DC. Yemen believed that GEF should participate in the efforts put forth in the area of environmental protection by the LDCs, to which belonged.

33. Yemen had taken note of the Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/58/191) submitted by the General-General and was interested in the activities carried out under the Convention, particularly in the recommendation formulated by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. The issue of deep seabed genetic resources and of ways to protect them and use them without affecting their sustainability was crucial.

34. International activities aimed at reducing pressure on biological diversity, particularly in view of rising population, prevailing modes of consumption and increasing generation of waste, played a key role in curbing losses in biological diversity. The issue of diversity should be mainstreamed into sectoral strategies and policies, work plans, regional, international and private-sector development initiatives and, generally speaking, into the framework of the Millennium Declaration.

35. **Mr. Yahya** (Israel) explained that Israel, a small but densely populated country, was characterized by large-scale immigration and population growth, rapid economic development, and complex and difficult geopolitical conflicts. The main challenge that it faced consisted in balancing the country's vital needs against the equally vital needs of environmental protection and sustainability.

36. Israel should therefore adopt a sustainable approach in policy and decision-making. The Government of Israel had recently adopted a sustainable development plan, according to which the current and future policies of the Israeli Government would be based on the principles of sustainable development practice, combining a dynamic economy, wise use of natural resources, protection of ecosystems and equal opportunities for all. Under that plan, the Government was mandated to promote the Plan of Implementation in accordance with the conditions prevalent in Israel and its economic capacity to finance activities resulting from the plan.

37. Examples of that approach were readily evident in the water and power sectors, while industry was reducing the quantities of waste that it produced. The private, public and government sectors were working, both separately and together, toward the conservation of biodiversity, especially by reintroducing or protecting particular species. These initiatives had been accompanied by growing public involvement. Environmental education, awareness and participation had significantly increased as evidenced by the growing number of non-governmental environmental organizations.

38. Israel recognized the significant advances made in sustainable development through international efforts, particularly the Convention to Combat Desertification and the work of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, and attached great importance to the COP's call for closer collaboration among the Rio Conventions and other relevant international organizations.

39. Israel, a dryland country, had a great deal of experience and expertise in combating desertification. It was therefore unfortunate that, barred from regional activity and group consultations under the Convention to Combat Desertification, it was the only country that, although willing, was unable to share its knowledge in this regard. International advances should find expression in the regional context. Israel called upon the States of the region to work with it to promote sustainable development, cooperating on issues that were vital to all citizens of the region.

40. **Ms. Grindlay** (Australia) said that Australia associated itself with the statement made by New Zealand on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum. Australia took its obligations under the Convention to Combat Desertification very seriously and was pleased with the important work done on the issue of alien invasive species that threatened ecosystems, habitats or local species in the lead-up to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, which met in April 2002. However, Australia had lodged at the time a formal objection to the adoption of the draft decision on alien invasive species and the associated guiding principles, because the text contained references that, Australia believed, entailed a high and unacceptable risk of increased trade protectionism.

Accordingly, Australia did not consider the draft decision on alien invasive species to have been validly adopted, given that it had been gavelled through in the face of Australia's formal objection. d That objection, however, would not in any way affect Australia's ability to meet the environmental objectives.

41. The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity would be held in February 2004 and Australia wanted to act constructively and cooperate with other parties and the Secretariat of the Convention to resolve the substantive issue. It was important to continue informal consultations on the issue in order to reach a decision that all parties could support.

42. **Ms. Piá-Comella** (Andorra) said, concerning agenda item 94 (g) ("Sustainable mountain development"), that the celebration of the International Year of Mountains had provided an excellent opportunity to bring out the complexity, diversity and importance of issues related to mountains and to putting them to good use. Like other governments, the Government of Andorra had set up a national committee for the International Year of Mountains. The committee's primary objective was to interest the population in the sustainable exploitation of mountains in general and of the Andorran mountains in particular.

43. The time was right to consolidate national-committee initiatives, national mountain-policies and the active participation of civil society and nongovernmental organizations in order to organize international partnerships for the sustainable development of mountains. The representative thanked the Government of Italy for the excellent organization of the meeting at Merano, and FAO for coordinating that joint initiative. In 2004, mountain countries should continue to cooperate. The Principality of Andorra planned to contribute to that cooperation according to its means.

44. **Mr. Lomba** (Gabon) said that the World Summit on Sustainable Development had afforded an opportunity to assess the activities carried out in the area of sustainable development and to map out new strategies for attaining the two main objectives of the Millennium: poverty reduction and environmental protection. The Convention on Biological Diversity stressed two themes that were crucial: setting up an international system ensuring a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological and genetic resources, and supporting initiatives for hot spot areas and other areas essential for biodiversity, promoting the development of national and regional ecological networks and corridors. Effective implementation of the Convention depended on the relation between safeguarding biological diversity and meeting economic and social needs. Good knowledge of the social context was therefore prerequisite to the sustainable management of global ecosystems, and Gabon suggested that the working group set up by the General-General should take into account the social structures of a population, how they used its territory, and the pressure that they exerted on the environment. The Convention should prioritize long-term objectives, including in particular raising population awareness of the importance of biological diversity for socio-economic development, and of the goods and services that it provided. The exploitation of deep seabed genetic resources fell within no national jurisdiction and therefore should be studied in detail by the Secretariat of the Convention.

45. The Convention on Biological Diversity had recognized the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity for meeting the food, health and other needs of an ever-increasing world population. Accessing and sharing genetic resources and technology were therefore indispensable.

46. Gabon had recently announced the establishment of 13 national parks intended to provide a source of revenue to the population under a plan aimed at the full exploitation of the carbon content of Gabonese forest products. The Government of Gabon intended to also set up put a forests- and fisheries-observatory as a national initiative under the convergence plan adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Forests of Central Africa (COMIFAC) - whose headquarters were in Yaoundé, Cameroon - and implemented with the cooperation of the European Union, the United States, Canada and Japan. Environmental problems could be addressed only through close cooperation among development stakeholders and partners. Accordingly, Gabon fully supported the idea of an international system whose main objective would be to ensure a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological and genetic resources.

47. **Ms. Zenna** (Ethiopia) said that progress in implementing the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was made against a backdrop of ever-greater damages from environmental and technological

disasters. Such occurrences disproportionately affected developing countries, whose losses per GDP unit were about five times higher than those of wealthy countries and sometimes exceeded the value of a year or more of hard-won and desperately needed economic development.

48. Africa suffered natural disasters of various types: floods, drought and associated food insecurity, tropical storms and volcanic eruptions, which exacerbated the effects of such chronic problems of the region as poverty, wars and HIV/AIDS. Ethiopia believed that the UNDP strategy of support for building national disaster-reduction capacities was quite significant and deserved the full backing of the imitational community.

49. Ethiopia, a least developed country, faced formidable challenges in eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development: frequent disasters, drought, famine, epidemics, floods, landslides and earthquakes. In particular, recurrent drought and famine had been affecting millions for decades. In 2003, had it not been for the rapid and coordinated response of the Ethiopian Government and the international community, drought would have led to a large-scale disaster. The Ethiopian authorities, under a strategy for ensuring households food security, had formulated rural development policies focused on attaining food self-sufficiency on the national level. Although the implementation of these policies was incumbent upon the Government and the population, a poor country like Ethiopia needed assistance in human and institutional capacity building on all levels. Reducing the vulnerability of the population to disasters and minimizing their impact on development efforts would also require substantial financial resources from the donor community.

50. Ethiopia supported convening the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Japan in early 2005. With adequate preparation, the Conference could help to identify the gaps to be addressed and, through appropriate recommendations, set the vision for future work under the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, an essential instrument for promoting sustainable development.

51. **Mr. Don Nanjira** (World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) took note of the Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/58/277), adopted four years earlier, and expressed satisfaction with the work accomplished. Natural disasters featured prominently in WMO's mandate and programmes, not only because close to 75 percent of natural disasters had a hydrometeorological origin (floods, hurricanes, tropical storms or cyclones, droughts, weather-related forest fires, the El Nino/La Nina southern oscillation phenomena, etc.), but also, especially, because natural disasters knew no national borders, and without warning, indiscriminately, hit men and women, the young and the old, the poor and the rich. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, they were constituting ever-graver threats. It was therefore necessary to focus on preventing and attenuating the effects of disasters, and find ways of transforming into specific activities the measures, decisions, declarations and plans and programmes of action adopted in international fora such as the summits and other conferences organized by the United Nations, under instruments such as Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

52. The conditions for the successful implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction included: mobilizing financial and other support, working out adequate and efficient institutional arrangements to ensure that the measures agreed upon and adopted by disaster-reduction actors and partners were effectively implemented through specific actions and to facilitate assessing the progress made, and assisting developing countries, particularly those most vulnerable, with capacity-building.

53. WMO participated actively, as a scientific and technical organization, in global activities related to disaster prevention and mitigation, such as activities under conventions concerning the environment and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. WMO formulated disaster-mitigation programmes such as the World Weather Watch (WWW), the Global Observing System (GOS) and the Tropical Cyclone Programme.

54. Preparations for the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction, which was expected to take place at Kobe, Japan on 18-22 January 2005, should be launched with vision, drawing inspiration from the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held at Yokohama and the texts that it produced, in particular the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World. It was necessary to set up a machinery for the preparation of the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

55. Special attention should be paid to the situation of the countries and continents most vulnerable to disasters. Africa was the main example and its extreme vulnerability would be expected to receive concerted treatment at the Kobe Conference.

56. **Mr. Lolo** (Nigeria) recalled that the participants at the World Summit on Sustainable Development had reaffirmed the mandate of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as the high-level commission on sustainable development responsible within the United System for considering issues related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. In fact, they had resolved to ensure, through decisions on targets, timetables and partnerships, increased access to such basic requirements as clean water, sanitation, energy, health care, food security and the protection of biodiversity.

57. Since the adoption of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, the focus had shifted from principles and normative policies to implementation strategies. The Commission on Sustainable Development had tended to focus on specific measures, particularly by adopting a programme of work comprising seven two-year cycles. The representative recalled that the participants to the World Summit had stressed the importance of affordable and reliable energy services.

58. Nigeria recognized and supported the need for the diversification of energy as part of short- and long-term poverty-reduction strategies. The problems of consumption and production patterns and the question of the overall achievement of sustainable development should be addressed. However, the organizations of the United Nations system should refrain from re-opening debates and from actions likely to stir up controversy. In this regard, Nigeria believed that the establishment of a "world commission on renewable energy" was ill timed. The multiplication of bodies and the duplication of work should be avoided. What was most needed in United Nations activities was value added through the implementation of commitments, especially those of the Millennium Declaration, the Monterey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration.

59. Commenting the Secretary-General's report entitled "Environment and Sustainable Development - Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in the Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa" (A/58/158), the representative stressed that Nigeria, tempered by its experience of desertification from the Sahara and the encroachment of the Atlantic Ocean on its southern coastline, had witnessed at first hand the effects of land degradation and the loss of livelihood. Despite Nigeria's best efforts to take positive measures to control the loss of arable land and valuable forests, studies suggested that between 50 and 60 percent of the total land mass of Nigeria would become arid by 2030. Nigeria welcomed the role of the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification, and of GEF as a funding mechanism for combating desertification. Nigeria believed that the Secretariat should be financed from the United Nations regular budget. Ascribing great importance to capacity building, Nigeria commended the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which formed the framework of environmental protection in Africa.

Agenda item 98: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) *(continued)*

Draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.3

60. **Mr. Aboultahir** (Morocco) introduced, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the draft resolution entitled "Programme of Action for the International Year of Microcredit, 2005" (A/C.2/58/L.3), in which the General Assembly stressed the importance of celebrating that event, which provided an opportunity to bring out the importance of significance for poverty reduction and for attaining the Millennium Goals. He called upon the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Capital Development Fund to jointly coordinate the activities of the organizations of the United Nations System for the preparation and celebration of the Year and upon the Member States to set up national coordination or liaison committees entrusted with promoting activities linked to the preparation of the events. He expressed the hope that the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

61. **Mr. Sahakov** (Armenia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, stated that the territory referred to in the declaration of Azerbaijan was entirely under the control of a legitimately elected government. The

authorities of Nagorny Karabakh had repeatedly invited international observers to visit the area in order to ascertain the facts. The Armenian delegation urged once again Azerbaijan to enter into negotiations and make a genuine effort to help to work out a peaceful arrangement.

62. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) stated that aggression and occupation were notions recognized by the United Nations, given that the Security Council had adopted four resolutions on that subject. Armenia had not heeded the recommendations of the international community or the Security Council resolutions which, noting the intensification of armed conflict, had expressed preoccupation with the displacement of Azerbaijani civilians, reaffirmed that territorial sovereignty and integrity must be respected and reaffirmed that international borders were inviolable and the use of force with a view to acquiring territory unacceptable.

63. Regarding Azerbaijan's position in the negotiations, the United Nations had recognized the territorial integrity of Nagorny Karabakh and reaffirmed that the region belonged to Azerbaijan. The fact that Armenia chose to ignore the calls of the Security Council for immediate withdrawal of its occupation forces from Nagorny Karabakh was a source of preoccupation not only for the Azerbaijani Government but also for the seven neighbouring countries and the international community.

64. Concerning biological diversity, the sovereign right of any State to exploit its own resources was recognized under international ordinary law and reaffirmed in Agenda 21. Azerbaijan's preoccupation, expressed in its preceding statement, was therefore natural: How could a country meet its obligations, if it lacked the possibility to do so?

65. Concerning the legitimacy of the election of the Government of Nagorny Karabakh, the Azerbaijani representative noted that those elections had not been recognized by the international community. The fact that the region constituted an inalienable part of Azerbaijan had been acknowledged in many documents.

66. **Mr. Sahakov** (Armenia) pointed out that he had refuted the allegations of aggression in exercise of the right to reply some days earlier. In respect of the status of Nagorny Karabakh, he wished to reassert that that region had never been part of independent Azerbaijan. Regarding the Security Council resolutions, in which the parties concerned were urged to immediately resume negotiations with a view to the resolution of the conflict under the peace process of the Minsk Group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and through direct contacts, the Armenian representative said that Azerbaijan itself was in violation of the provisions. The Azerbaijani representatives had systematically refused to acknowledge the fact that the measures taken by Armenia met exactly the requests made of it in the Security Council resolutions, namely to use its good offices with the authorities in Nagorny Karabakh in order to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

67. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan), noting Armenia's assertion that it had implemented all of the provisions of the applicable resolutions of the Security Council, asked if it had met the Security Council's main requirement, namely that the Armenian occupation forces should withdraw from the Azerbaijani territory immediately and unconditionally. Azerbaijan's position on cooperation depended on the application of that provision. Further, the efficacy of the CSCE Minsk Group depended on the attitude of the international community, which should not accept a fait accompli policy, because the responsibilities of the victim and of the aggressor were not equal.

68. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon), noting that Israel had stated that it could not cooperate with the countries of the region and had subsequently invited those countries to cooperate in the area of sustainable development, asked how it was possible for the countries whose territories were occupied and their natural resources plundered to cooperate with the State that occupied the land? How could one ask a victim to cooperate with the aggressor? Every year, the Second Committee adopted a resolution reaffirming the Arab people's sovereignty on its natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the Golan, and the illegitimacy of the occupation of those territories. Lebanon was the first to hold that cooperation was in the interest of all parties, but cooperation should take place in the context of peace. Accordingly, at the Beirut Summit of 2002, all Arab countries had proposed to the international community an Arab initiative for peace. The peoples of the region aspired to sustainable development and wished to cooperate with all of the parties in the framework of a just and sustainable peace.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.